

Cupid Exclusive: The Double Life of Alfred Buber



By **Vincent D. Scebbi**

Every man has a virtual life that he lives in his imagination. Much of it surrounds fantasies about women. However, most keep their deep dark desires in check. [*The Double Life of Alfred Buber*](#) by David Schmahmann tells the story of a man who acts out his repressed urges. It is the story of a successful lawyer who feels deeply dissatisfied with his life. In an effort to find consolation, he secretly ventures to the brothels and bars of Southeast Asia while telling people he is in Paris or London. "Of course it doesn't end happily," said Schmahmann. The double-life can't end happily. But, some people do get away with it." To write the story, Schmahmann admits he didn't need to go far into his mind to get into the head of his character. Like Buber and many men, Schmahmann lives in a world of "what if" scenarios.

This scandalous novel was ironically released around the same time as the "sexting" controversy involving U.S. Representative, Anthony Weiner. Other notable scandals that have appeared in recent history include athletic figures such as Brett Farve and Rex Ryan, along with politicians such as former California Governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and John Edwards. Schmahmann has been asked many times if there is a correlation between powerful figures and sex scandals and he believes there is. It's been something that has been with us forever. "Jimmy Carter lusted after women and then you see characters like Al Gore who admitted to hanging out with hookers," Schmahmann said. "I think men, by and large, are a boiling mess of unacquired desires when it comes to women."

Politicians' desire for power and sense of feeling "bulletproof" carries over into their sex lives."

Though the Monica Lewinski scandal is cited as wrecking Clinton's political credibility, his marriage to current Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, remains intact. Schmahmann's character isn't married, however, he believes there is no definite reason why a woman chooses to stay or leave her partner. "Clinton's wife stuck with him. Jefferson's wife stuck with him even though he was raising a second family with her half-sister. Weiner's wife stuck with him on the other hand, Schwarzenegger's wife has left," stated Schmahmann. The author suspects these urges that can cause a double life stem from youth and perhaps a solution can be found there. "These impulses are a residue of adolescence, I think, even if you look at popular culture references such as *American Pie*, boys spend their teenage years attempting to understand and get access to girls, and I think to some extent, healthier adolescences make healthier adults, but that's too much to ask," Schmahmann said. Schmahmann does offer some advice for anyone struggling in a double life, quoting the Dali Lama, "don't confuse pleasure with happiness. Happiness is a much more stable, long-term goal."

David Schmahmann was born in Durban, South Africa. He is a graduate of Dartmouth College and Cornell Law School, and has studied in India and Israel and worked in Burma. His first novel, *Empire Settings*, received the John Gardner Book Award, and his publications include a short story in *The Yale Review* and articles on legal issues. He practices law in Boston, and lives in Weston, Massachusetts with his wife and two daughters. You can order his book online at Amazon or BarnesandNoble.com.